

Conference Paper

The Schematic Structure of North Sumatran Folktales

T. Thyrhaya Zein, T. Silvana Sinar, and Muhammad Yusuf

Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

ORCID:T. Thyrhaya Zein: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9415-6329>**Abstract**

This research aimed to analyze the schematic structure of North Sumatran folktales by using the Systemic Functional Linguistic approach and the concept of the narrative genre. Descriptive qualitative research methods were used. The data were collected through documentation and the data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana. The researchers asked English university students to write North Sumatran folktales based on the narrative genre. The research data were in the form of clauses taken from these writings. In analyzing the data, the researchers labeled the clauses based on experiential function and the text was then identified by schematic structure of the narrative genre. The schematic structure of the North Sumatran folktales written by the English university students consisted of the following stages: orientation (OR), sequence of events (Ev), stating problems (Pr), resolution (Re), and coda (Co). So it could be patterned as follows: $[Or] \wedge [Ev_{(n)}] \wedge Pr \wedge Re \wedge Co$. The texts started with orientations as the way to introduce the basis of the story which was followed by the sequence of events as a way to build up the story, wherein it was used interchangeably with stating problems; there were even some texts that had both in one constraint. At the end of the texts, resolution became the stage used the most. Coda was the optional move used to round-up the story nicely.

Keywords: systemic functional linguistics, schematic structure, narrative genre, folktales

Corresponding Author:

T. Thyrhaya Zein

t.thyrhaya@usu.ac.id

Published: 11 March 2021

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

© T. Thyrhaya Zein et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the AICLL Conference Committee.

1. Introduction

Teaching English should be functional and drive students' ability to utilize language based on the context (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2018). This makes sense since the ability of using English will be used in real life condition (García Montes et al., 2014) and it can change based on the context. The syllabus of teaching writing in tertiary level in Universitas Sumatera Utara includes the ability to write some academic genres. The obvious fact is this activity is not an easy work since it needs the elaboration



of knowledge of the academic writing genres with their particular linguistic features (Aunurrahman et al., 2017).

Writing is productive skills used to deliver the idea, message, and thought through written form (Zein et al., 2019). It is a subtle process (Aidinlou, 2011) and it elaborates the number of process altogether such as planning, drafting, editing, and final version (Harmer, 2004). Having good ability in writing is compulsory since it is important to communicate besides using spoken text. This skill becomes challenging (Dalimunthe, 2018), complicated, and problematic both for students and teachers. The students need ideas elaboration to make the text coherent and cohesive. If the students cannot produce good text, they have to retake the course. For teachers, they have to assess it with some criteria such as language use, mechanism, content, vocabulary, and text organization.

The systemic functional linguistics (SFL) approach sees language as meaning resources. This approach is utilized to observe language such as how language used in society and how meaning is constructed in linguistic interaction. This approach is also regarded as the approach of language in social context (Emilia & Hamied, 2015) and greatly have impact to the teaching of writing (Dalimunthe, 2018) especially in Indonesia which applies genre-based approach curriculum (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2018). Through this approach, the teachers are expected to drive students to comprehend the text (Cakrawati, 2018). In SFL, text are divided into some genres such as recount, descriptive, exposition, report, discussion, narrative, and so on (Gerot & Wignell, 1994).

Every genre is different each other. They are differentiated based on their characteristics (Zein et al., 2019). A good text needs the the fulfilment of three features namely communicative purpose or social function, linguistic features, and the schematic structure. So, besides good construction of ideas, the realization of those three features in genre text have to be considered by the writers.

Narrative text is included in the syllabus of teaching writing for tertiary level especially in English Department of Universitas Sumatera Utara. This genre is used to amuse, entertain and to deal with actual or experience in different ways, narratives deal with problematic event which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kinds which in turn finds a resolution. (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). The structures of narrative include orientation, sequence of events (complication and evaluation), resolution, and coda (optional) (Anderson & Anderson, 2004; Joyce & Feez, 2000; Mulyaningsih, 2013; Zein et al., 2019). This genre is mainly employed to tell folktales such as legends, fairy tales, and myths. North Sumatra has eight ethnic groups and each of them has three types

of folklores, such as the legend of snake princess, Lake Toba, Putri Hijau, Sampuraga, and others.

The fulfillment of the schematic or generic structure of narrative text is essential. Moreover, it can make the text becomes logic since it is realized in chronological order. The orientation part is used as an acquaintance followed by sequence of the events to explain the process of an action. Then, resolution is followed as the result of the event. The folktales usually contains moral lesson which represents the local wisdom content from that region. In relation to the structure of narrative text, it can be inserted in the *coda* part. Some experts argue that it is only optional which means that the writer can choose whether to put in their text or not. Even though this is not compulsory, the existence of coda is to make narrative text more meaningful.

The research related to genre specifically narative text has become the concern of many scholars. Correa & Domínguez (2014) attempt to explore how a teacher analyzes students' narrative texts by using SFL theory. They conclude that writing academic narrative text is not easy. It needs vocabulary elaboration and the knowledge of language metafunction resources. The other research done by Suhartini (2016) explores six narrative texts from two textbooks to see the characteristics. She draws the conclusion that there are similarities and differences among those texts. The difference includes the communicative purposes and schematic structure of the text.

This study is urgent in order to see students' capability in writing narrative text. Therefore, this study is addressed to analyze the schematic structure of North Sumatra's folktales by using the approach of Systemic Functional Linguistic and concept of narrative genre. The findings is hoped to give advantages in the process of teaching writing in Indonesia specifically teaching narrative text.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics

The approach of SFL is closely related to context (Eggins, 2004). This approach also observes language as the meaning-making resources to be used in daily interaction. Language is also seen as systemic since it owns a set of choice systems (Figueiredo, 2010). Through this approach, language is regarded to have meanings called as metafunction of language. Those matafunctions have equal status (Sinar, 2007) covering ideational function, textual function, and interpersonal function (Halliday & Matthiessen,

2004). Even though they have equal status, but they are realized in distinctive system of grammar (Emilia & Hamied, 2015).

Context in SFL comprises of context of situation, context of culture, and ideology. The context of culture marks the genre features of a text or its structure. Context of situation called as register comprises of field, tenor, and mode. An ideology is a set of beliefs and values attributed to a person or group of persons. This context is realized through the use of linguistic features in text (Correa & Domínguez, 2014). The application of SFL is very close to curriculum of teaching English in Indonesia through genre-based approach (Dewi & Kurniawan, 2018). In relation to academic writing development, SFL is also possible to be utilized (Donohue, 2012), and advantageous to assess students' writing (Lirola, 2010). Even, some researchers apply the theory of SFL outside linguistic field such as using SFL for tool in mathematics (Ebbelind & Segerby, 2015).

2.2. Narrative Text

Narrative text is one of the academic genres (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). Anderson & Anderson (2004) add that this genre tells a story in order to amuse and informs the reader or listener. This genre illustrates people's reaction to experiences, and exploring social as well as cultural values (Mulyaningsih, 2013). Joyce & Feez (2000) state that this genre has some linguistic features such as specific often individual participants with defined identities, the utilization of material process, dominant use of simple past tense, the dialogue among the participants or characters, descriptive language, and the use either first or third person. The other important aspect is the schematic or generic structure of the text. The generic structure is the way in which elements of a text are arranged to suit its purpose. Basically, the structure of each genre is influenced by context of culture (Correa & Domínguez, 2014). The structure of this narrative text is presented as the following.

1. Orientation: It is the introduction of the story telling about the characters and the setting. This stage constructs the atmosphere, foreshadows the action to follow, and makes the reader want to become involved in the story (Correa & Domínguez, 2014).

2. Complication

Complication is the main section of a narrative (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). This part introduces a series of events during which there is one or more problems

for characters to resolve, involving problem and struggle episodes (Correa & Domínguez, 2014).

3. Evaluation

Evaluation presents the highlight of significance of events for characters and resolution to resolve these issues (Correa & Domínguez, 2014).

4. Resolution

Resolution shows how crisis is resolved.

5. Coda

Coda is the concluding stage. The purpose is to make a point about the text as a whole. It brings readers back to the present situation (Correa & Domínguez, 2014). This part can be used to present the moral lesson of the story.

The arrangement pattern used by the English Department students in expressing their ideas was not in accordance with the stages offered in generic structure of narrative.

3. Research Method

This study utilized qualitative approach through content analysis method. The research was done at English Literature Department at Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. The number of participants involved representing English literature students was 30 second-year students. The reason for choosing the 30 participants was that material of the narrative genre had been taught to them and this material has been proven by the syllabus document of writing courses that obtained from the English Literature Department. The research data were taken from the narrative genre written by students with a focus on North Sumatra's folk tales. The text should have at least 275-400 words. The data were analyzed by applying an interactive analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2014) which consisting of several stages.

4. Result and Discussion

This part explains how students realized the structure of the text in their writing. Narrative text requires the chronological event in order to show the text coherency. From the data, it was discovered that there are 10 texts that includes the entire schematic structure of this text namely text 1, 5, 7, 10, 15, 17, 18, 21, and 22. They successfully present

the structure of narrative text i.e. Orientations (OR)∧Sequence of Events (Ev)∧Stating Problems (Pr)∧Resolution (Re)∧Coda (Co).

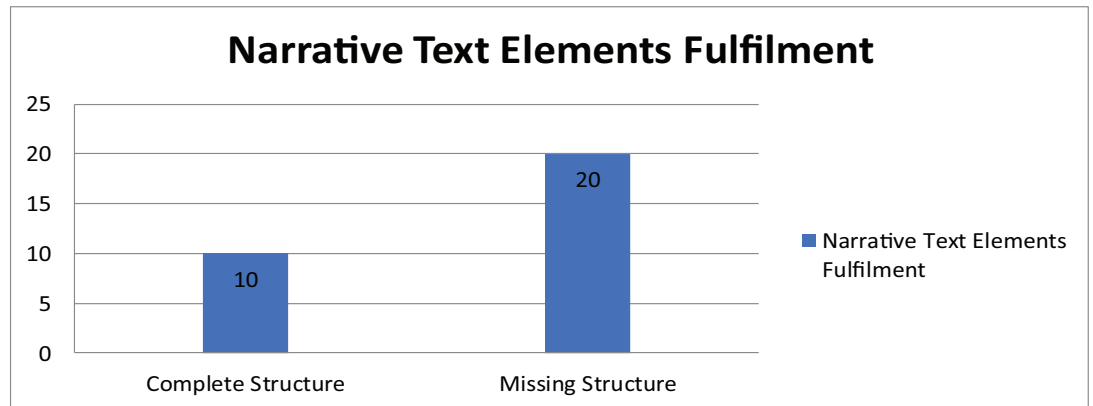


Figure 1: Students' Narrative Text Element Fulfilment

Looking at the structure one by one, the students have successfully written the orientation part. It is clear that the characters and the settings have been presented to make the readers familiar about who are involved in the story. The next part is sequence of event covering complication. There are 5 texts which do not include this part clearly i.e. text 8, 12, 20, 24, and 25. Complication is sine qua non in narrative text since it is related to the statement of problem and the climax of the conflict. This illustrates that students have difficulty in making a clear illustration about what actually happen in the story. Following sequence of events is resolution part. There are 5 texts do not contain this part namely text 3, 11, 23, 27. 28. In this section, it is shown how crisis is solved. The last part in the schematic structure of narrative is coda which has plays the role as the concluding stage aiming to make a point about the text as a whole. It sometimes conveys comment of the narrator towards the significance of the narrative. This part does not exist in 10 texts (2, 4, 6, 9, 14, 16, 19, 26, 29, and 30). The details are presented in the following figure.

The findings present that some students do not write the complete structure of narrative text. In relation to the data, the missing parts are sequence of events (not clearly explained the conflict), and coda. This leads to the interpretation that students' ability in writing this genre is vary. Research done by Mulyaningsih (2013) also provides the same result. The higher achiever students are better than lower achievement students in presenting the structure of narrative text. The higher achiever dominantly construct the structure by presenting the pattern of orientation∧ complication∧sequence of events∧ resolution∧ (coda). On the other hand, lower achiever students have the pattern

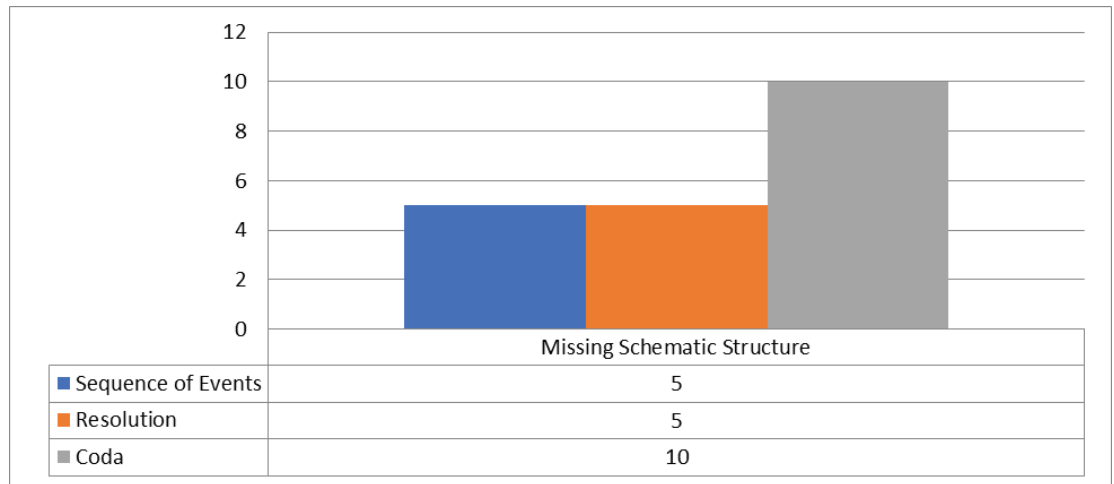


Figure 2: Students' Missing Schematic Structure of Narrative Text

orientation^ complication ^ resolution. Even though this research is quite different from Mulyaningsih since there is no levelling to the subject of the research.

The other research also sees the students' ability in writing narrative text based on the category of L1 or L2 learner. Jeong (2017) states that genre mastery is influenced by language proficiency level, and those novice-level students are more comfortable in writing narrative texts. He further argues that For L2 learners, the acquisition of a genre can be related to language proficiency. This makes sense the English literature students in Universitas Sumatera Utara is regarded as L2 learners.

In relation to findings, the students' mastery is still low. Narratives seem to present the least difficulty to students, but their teaching needs to be carefully planned (Correa & Domínguez, 2014). Well-planned teaching process through the involvement of some method or techniques can improve students' mastery. Since the teaching writing process employs *genre-based approach*, SFL-GP as proposed by Emilia & Hamied (2015) can be used as an alternative to be implemented in the this process.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

The result shows that the schematic structure of North Sumatra's folktales that written by English university students consists of stages as follow: Orientations (OR), Sequence of Events (Ev), Stating Problems (Pr), Resolution (Re) and Coda (Co). The overall schematic structure of the narrative texts is; [Or]^ [Ev(n).Pr]^ [Re]^ (Co). The texts obviously start with orientations as the way to introduce the basis of the story then followed by sequence of events as a way to build up the storywherein it is used interchangeably with stating problems, even there are some texts that have both exist in one constraint. At the end

of the text, resolution becomes the stage used the most especially if the problem of the story stated and coda as the optional move used to round-up the story nicely.

This study has limitation specifically in the subject of the research. Further research is boosted to conduct the research based on genre differences, the level of achievers, or nativity of English to see the construction of narrative text. Then, since the results indicate that students' mastery in writing this genre is still low, it is suggested to the lecturer to adjust the way of teaching by implementing other techniques or methods in order to improve students' achievement.

Acknowledgement

The writers address their thankfulness to Research Institute of Universitas Sumatera Utara for the TALENTA research grant in 2017 and other parties which help the writers in conducting this research.

References

- [1] Aidinlou, N. A. (2011). A Discourse-Based Teaching of Writing for Iranian EFL Students: A Systemic Perspective. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, issue 8, pp. 53–70.
- [2] Anderson, K. and Anderson, M. (2003). *Text Types in English 2*. Malaysia: The Modern Art Production Group.
- [3] Aunurrahman, A., Hamied, F. A. H. and Emilia, E. (2017). Exploring the Tertiary EFL Students' Academic Writing Competencies. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 7, issue 1, pp. 72–79.
- [4] Cakrawati, L. M. (2018). Recount Text in SFL Perspective: Pedagogical Implication Based on Student's Writing Analysis. *Register Journal*, vol. 11, issue 2, pp. 210–227.
- [5] Correa, D. and Domínguez, C. (2014). Using SFL as a Tool for Analyzing Students' Narratives. *HOW*, vol. 21, issue 2, pp. 112–133.
- [6] Dalimunthe, R. N. R. P. (2018). Teaching Writing to Indonesian EFL Learners with Systemic Functional Linguistic Instruction. *BELTIC Journal*, vol. 1, issue 1, pp. 48–55.
- [7] Dewi, R. K. S. and Kurniawan, E. (2018). Seeing Recount from Systemic Functional Linguistic Perspective: Sine Qua Non Attributes. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, vol. 4, issue 1, pp. 43–52.

- [8] Donohue, J. P. (2012). Using Systemic Functional Linguistics in Academic Writing Development: an Example from Film Studies. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, vol. 11, issue 1, pp. 4–16.
- [9] Ebbelind, A. and Segerby, C. (2015). Systemic Functional Linguistics as a Methodological Tool in Mathematics Education Research. *Nordic Studies in Mathematics Education*, vol. 20, issue 1, pp. 22–54.
- [10] Eggins, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2nd ed.). London, U.K: Continuum.
- [11] Emilia, E. and Hamied, F. A. (2015). Systemic Functional Linguistic Genre Pedagogy (SFL GP) in a Tertiary EFL Writing Context in Indonesia. *TEFLIN Journal*, vol. 26, issue 2, pp. 155–182.
- [12] Figueiredo, D. (2010). Context, Register and Genre: Implications for Language Education. *Revista Signos*, vol. 43, issue 1, pp. 119–141.
- [13] García Montes, P. A., Sagre Barboza, A. M. and Lacharme Olascoaga, A. I. (2014). Systemic Functional Linguistics and Discourse Analysis as Alternatives when Dealing with Texts. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, vol. 16, issue 2, pp. 101–116.
- [14] Gerot, L. and Wignell, P. (1994). *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. New South Wales, Australia: Gerd Stabler, Antipodean Educational Enterprises.
- [15] Halliday, M. A. K. and Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.). London: Hodder Arnold.
- [16] Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. Harlow, U.K: Pearson Education Ltd.
- [17] Jeong, H. (2017). Narrative and Expository Genre Effects on Students, Raters, and Performance Criteria. *Assessing Writing*, issue 31, pp. 113–125.
- [18] Joyce, H. and Feez, S. (2000). *Writing Skills: Narrative and Non-Fiction Text Types*. Sydney: Phoenix Education Pty Ltd.
- [19] Lirola, M. M. (2010). How to Apply SFL in Classroom Practice: An Example in Bilingual Education Programs in the USA. *The Buckingham Journal of Language and Linguistics*, issue 3, pp. 205–219.
- [20] Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. and Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication Inc.
- [21] Mulyaningsih, D. U. (2013). An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Texts: A Case Study at One Public Junior High Schools in Bandung. *Journal of English and Education*, vol. 1, issue 2, pp. 16–22.

- [22] Sinar, T. S. (2007). Phasal and Experiential Realizations in Lecture Discourse: A Systemic-Functional Analysis. Medan: *Koordinasi Perguruan Tinggi Swasta Wilayah- I NAD-Sumut*.
- [23] Suhartini, V. T. (2016). An Analysis of Narrative Texts in Textbooks Used by Eight Grade Students (Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective). *Journal of English and Education*, vol. 4, issue 2, pp. 115–123.
- [24] Zein, T. T., *et al.* (2019). The Incomplete Linguistic Features and Schematic Structure in EFL University Students' Narrative Texts. *JETL (Journal of Education, Teaching and Learning)*, vol. 4, issue 1, pp. 203–209.